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I believe national security begins at home with the economic security, **health security**, education security, and environment/energy security of our citizens; these four security pillars, along with defense security, provide for our country's overall national security. Like all the others, health security is not just an individual matter but rather critical to America's collective prosperity.

Upon assuming office, one of the first priorities I set was to reform our healthcare system. I requested membership in the Small Business and Education and Labor Committee's healthcare subcommittees and proposed nine steps. First, shift away from fee-for-service programs; pay providers adequately; give patients the same choices as Members of Congress; share the costs; expand transitional health tax credits; institute mental health parity; improve performance in treating chronic disease; increase the use of health information technology; and, establish health courts for malpractice cases.

I believe we need a health care system that ensures every American has affordable, accessible and quality care through a shared duty between society and government. The best approach a system in which disciplined costs and high standards are a priority. Competition and transparency of these standards will ultimately discipline costs while providing quality care. I am a strong supporter of Medicare and Medicaid, but we can offer the best care by rewarding caregivers for the quality, not the quantity of care, encouraging competition, and requiring

performance standards that lead us toward a system of preventive care, early diagnosis and treatment of chronic conditions. Ultimately, we all benefit financially because of savings from reduced hospitalizations and other expensive health services. As part of health reform, I support the inclusion of a public plan that competes on a level playing field with private insurers, which has elements along the lines of the following: subject to the same rules, regulations, and requirements as all other plans, and pay for care from individual's premiums and copayments -- not general government revenue.

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[Click here](#) for information on the Pediatric Cancer Caucus, which Congressman Sestak co-chairs.